

O verray Lord of love, O God, alas!
That knowest best myn herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorwful lyf don in this cas
If I forgo that I so dere have bought?
Sin ye Criseyde and me han fully brought
Into your grace, and bothe our hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, alas! it be repeled?

What I may doon, I shal, why! I may dure
On lyve in torment and in cruel peyne,
This infortune or this disaventure,
Allone as I was born, ywis, compleyne;
Ne never wil I seen it shyne or reyne;
But ende I wil, as Edippe, in derknesse
My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.

O wery goost, that errest to and fro,
Why niltow fleen out of the wofulleste
Body, that ever mighte on grounde go?
O soule, lurking in this wo, unneeste,
flee forth out of myn herte, and lat it breste,
And folwe alwey Criseyde, thy lady dere;
Thy righte place is now no lenger here!

O wofulle eyen two, sin your disport
Was al to seen Criseydes eyen brighte,
What shal ye doon but, for my discomfort,
Stonden for nought, and wepen out your sighte?
Sin she is queynt, that wont was yow to lighte,
In veyn fro this forth have I eyen tweye
Yformed, sin your vertue is awaye.

O my Criseyde, O lady sovereyne
Of thilke woful soule that thus cryeth,
Who shal now yeven comfort to my peyne?
Alas, no wight; but when myn herte dyeth,
My spirit, which that so unto yow hyeth,
Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve;
forthy no fors is, though the body sterve.

O ye lovers, that heighe upon the wheel
Ben set of fortune, in good aventure,
God leve that ye finde ay love of steel,
And longe mot your lyf in joye endure!
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your felawe resteth there;
for I lovede eek, though I unworthy were.

O olde unholsom and mislyved man,
Calkas I mene, alas! what eyeth thee
To been a Greek, sin thou art born Troian?
O Calkas, which that wilt my bane be,
In cursed tyme was thou born for me!
As wolde blisful Jove, for his joye,
That I thee hadde, where I wolde, in Troye!

A thousand sykes, hottere than the glede,
Out of his brest ech after other wente,
Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to fede,
for which his woful teres never stente;
And shortly, so his peynes him torente,
And wex so mat, that joye nor penaunce
He feleth noon, but lyth forth in a traunce.

Pandare, which that in the parlement
Hadde herd what every lord and burgeys seyde,
And how ful graunted was, by oon assent,
for Antenor to yelden so Criseyde,
Gan wel neigh wood out of his wit to breyde,
So that, for wo, he niste what he mente;
But in a rees to Troilus he wente.

A certeyn knight, that for the tyme kepte
The chaumbre dore, undide it him anon;
And Pandare, that ful tendrelliche wepte,
Into the derke chaumbre, as stille as stoon,
Toward the bed gan softly to goon,
So confus, that he niste what to seye;
for verray wo his wit was neigh awaye.

And with his chere and loking al totorn,
for sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this woful Troilus biforn,
And on his pitous face he gan biholden;
But Lord, so often gan his herte colden,
Seing his freend in wo, whos hevinesse
His herte slow, as thoughte him, for distresse.

This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte
His freend Pandare yemen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte,
for which this sorwful Pandare, of pitee,
Gan for to wepe as tendrelliche as he;
And specheles thus been thise ilke tweye,
That neyther mighte o word for sorwe seye.

But at the laste this woful Troilus,
Ney deed for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noyse he seyde thus,
Among his sobbes and his sykes sore:
Lo! Pandare, I am deed, withouten more.
Hastow nought herd at parlement, he seyde,
for Antenor how lost is my Criseyde?

This Pandarus, ful deed and pale of hewe,
ful pitously answerde and seyde: Yis!
As wisly were it fals as it is trewe,
That I have herd, and wot al how it is.
O mercy, God, who wolde have trowed this?
Who wolde have wend that, in so litel a throwe,
fortune our joye wolde han overthrowe?

for in this world ther is no creature,
As to my doom, that ever saw ruyne
Straungere than this, thorough cas or aventure.
But who may al eschewe or al devyne?
Swich is this world; forthy I thus defyne,
Ne trust no wight to finden in fortune
Ay proprete; hir yeftes been comune.

But tel me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorwen thus? Why lystow in this wyse,
Sin thy desyr al holly hastow had,
So that, by right, it oughte ynow suffyse?
But I, that never felte in my servyse
A frendly chere or loking of an ye,
Lat me thus wepe and wayle, til I dye.

And over al this, as thou wel wost thyselfe,
This town is ful of ladies al aboute;
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
As ever she was, shal I finde, in som route,
Ye, oon or two, withouten any doute.
forthy be glad, myn owene dere brother,
If she be lost, we shul recovere another.

What, God forbede alwey that ech plesaunce
In o thing were, and in non other wight!
If oon can singe, another can wel daunce;
If this be goodly, she is glad and light;
And this is fayr, and that can good aright.
Ech for his vertu holden is for dere,
Bothe heroner and faucon for rivere.

And eek, as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys:
The newe love out chaceth ofte the olde;
And upon newe cas lyth newe avys.
Thenk eek, thyself to saven artow holde;
Swich fyr, by proces, shal of kinde colde.
for sin it is but casuel plesaunce,
som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce.

for also seur as day cometh after night,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or elles selde seinge of a wight,
Don olde affeciouns alle overgo.
And, for thy part, thou shalt have oon of tho
To abrigge with thy bitre peynes smerte;
Absence of hir shal dryve hir out of herte.

Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
To helpe his freend, lest he for sorwe deyde.
for douteles, to doon his wo to falle,
heroughte not what unthrift that he seyde.
But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde,
Tok litel hede of al that ever he mente;
Oon ere it herde, at the other out it wente:

But at the laste answerde and seyde: freend,
This lechecraft, or heled thus to be,
Were wel sitting, if that I were a feend,
To traysen hir that trewe is unto me!
I pray God, lat this consayl never ythee;
But do me rather sterve anon right here
Er I thus do as thou me woldest lere.

She that I serve, ywis, what so thou seye,
To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,
Shal han me holly hires til that I deyde.
for, Pandarus, sin I have trouthe hir hight,
I wol not been untrew for no wight;
But as hir man I wol ay live and sterve,
And never other creature serve.

And ther thou seyst, thou shalt as faire finde
As she, lat be, make no comparisoun
To creature yformed here by kinde.
O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,
I wol not be of thyn opinioun,
Touching al this; for whiche I thee bisече,
So hold thy pees; thou sleest me with thy speche.

Thow biddest me I sholde love another
Al freshly newe, and lat Criseyde go!
It lyth not in my power, leve brother.
And though I mighte, I wolde not do so.
But canstow pleyen raket, to and fro,
Netle in, dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare?
Now foule falle hir, for thy wo that care!

Thow farest eek by me, thou Pandarus,
As he, that whan a wight is wo bigoon,
He cometh to him a pas, and seyth right thus:
Thenk not on smert, and thou shalt fele noon.
Thou most me first transmuwen in a stoon,
And reve me my passiounes alle,
Er thou so lightly do my wo to falle.

The deeth may wel out of my brest departe
The lyf, so longe may this sorwe myne;
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte
Out nevermo; but down with Proserpyne,
Whan I am deed, I wol go wone in pyne;
And ther I wol eternally compleyne
My wo, and how that twinned be we tweyne.

Thow hast here maad an argument, for fyn,
How that it sholde lasse peyne be
Criseyde to forgoon, for she was myn,
And live in ese and in felicitie.
Why gabbestow, that seydest thus to me
That him is wors that is fro wele ythrowe,
Than he hadde erst non of that wele yknowe?

But tel me now, sin that thee thinketh so light
To chaungen so in love, ay to and fro,
Why hastow not don bisily thy might
To chaungen hir that doth thee al thy wo?
Why niltow lete hir fro thyn herte go?
Why niltow love another lady swete,
That may thyn herte setten in quiete?

If thou hast had in love ay yet mischaunce,
And canst it not out of thyn herte dryve,
I, that livede in lust and in plesaunce
With hir as muche as creature onlyve,
How sholde I that foryete, and that so blyve?
O where hastow ben bid so longe in muwe,
That canst so wel and formely arguwe?

Nay, nay, God wot, nought worth is al thy reed,
for which, for what that ever may bifalle,
Withouten wordes mo, I wol be deed.
O deeth, that endere art of sorwes alle,
Com now, sin I so ofte after thee calle;
for sely is that deeth, soth for to seyne,
That, ofte ycleped, cometh and endeth peyne.

Wel wot I, why! my lyf was in quiete,
Er thou me slowe, I wolde have yeven hyre;
But now thy cominge is to me so swete,
That in this world I nothing so desyre.
O deeth, sin with this sorwe I am afyre,
Thou outhur do me anon in teres drenche,
Or with thy colde strook myn hete quenche!